

5 IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

	In re patent application of:)	
)	Before the Examiner
10	Mark Bland, et al.)	
)	
	Serial No. Not Yet Assigned)	
)	Group Art Unit: Not Yet Assigned
	Filed: January 23, 2004)	
15)	
	HINGE SYSTEM FOR)	January 23, 2004
	ARTICULATING MOWER DECKS)	

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PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
25 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

30 Please enter the following amendments in the above-identified application. No
additional fees are believed to be due. However, if any further fees are deemed
necessary, please charge said fees to Deposit Account No. 23-3030, but not to include the
payment of any issue fee.

IN THE SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Please replace the Summary of the Invention with the following:

5 Generally speaking, a hinge system articulating lawn mower decks is provided that resists wear and facilitates servicing and replacement. The hinge system includes a front and a rear hinge assembly that hingedly connects a first mower deck to a second mower deck.

 Hingedly connected articulating mower decks include a first mower deck having a
10 first mower frame member defining a first frame hole with a first axis; a second mower deck having a second mower frame member defining a second frame hole with a second axis; a first bushing having a first bushing hole and a first bushing axis, being sized for press fit receipt in the first frame hole, and being sized to rotatably coaxially receive a pin therein; a second bushing having a second bushing hole and a second bushing axis, being
15 sized for axially non-rotating receipt in the second frame hole, and being sized to rotatably coaxially receive a pin therein; a pin having inboard and outboard ends and a pin axis, the pin sized to extend coaxially through the first and second bushing holes; a connector connected to the outboard end of the pin and for connecting the pin to the second frame member and holding the pin against horizontal movement relative to the
20 second frame member and for providing a stop for limiting movement of the second bushing toward the outboard end of the pin; and, a retention member connected proximal to the inboard end of the pin and limiting movement of the bushings inwardly of the retention member.

It is an object of the present invention to provide an improved hinge system for articulating mower decks.

Further objects and advantages will become apparent from the following description of the preferred embodiment.